

Romeoville reviews comprehensive plan

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In an effort to continue balanced growth, infrastructure and maintain an eye for directed development with the village's goals intact, Romeoville leaders are in the process of reviewing its Comprehensive Plan for its future.

The village's existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2001. According to minutes from the planning and zoning committee, the updated Comprehensive Plan builds off the 2001 plan and provides a statement of policy for land use, transportation, infrastructure and development decisions.

In 2015, the village received a grant from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to hire consultants to update its Comprehensive Plan. Since 2016 Teska Associates, village staff, and Gruen + Gruen Associates, have been conducting research, public outreach and developing recommendations.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan also evaluates and plans for the East Side area in anticipation of the coming Metra Station, which the village just broke ground on along New Avenue.

Key planning themes, according to Teska, revolve around advancing a balanced economic base; ensuring market-supportive strategies; enhancing access and mobility; diversifying the housing stock; and leveraging community partnerships. In addition, the group was to examine continued plans for Uptown Square, and the Weber Road corridor seen as a village lifestyle center, employment center and commercial/entertainment center.

The plan indicates that Romeoville's legacy as an industrial town has provided a strong local economy and significant job growth. The industrial base will remain a dominant part of the village's economy. However, diversifying employment opportunities, and providing for services, commercial, and entertainment uses that cater to needs of residents is necessary to create a more complete and sustainable community.

To ensure market-supportive strategies, the plan suggests encouraging development by introducing a broad range

of uses to the community. A diversity of uses could support directly or indirectly the fiscal health of the village through additional tax revenue, new services, and supportive uses that make existing business more successful and enhance the stability of neighborhoods. The report indicates that fiscal sustainability is dependent on the ability of the village to withstand significant changes in economic trends, such as the rapid changes in retailing, loss of taxes, or decline of significant business sectors, such as manufacturing.

Transportation planning would take a multimodal approach to ensure all modes are properly integrated into the design of the built environment, providing for safe and convenient routes for all travelers and connectivity between neighborhoods, shops, services, parks, open space, and other community amenities.

Key to the plan would be diversifying its housing stock. Teska believes expanding housing options will ensure residents can age in place by finding suitable housing types that meet their changing needs over time without having to leave Romeoville. To meet this end, it is suggested that the village should promote housing policies that support the distribution of diverse housing types at varying price points.

Planning and zoning members questioned how to handle challenges faced by a changing demographic in attracting restaurants to the area. Teska Associates stated that Romeoville has a strong population base with good density but faces some global challenges, with retail areas nearby such as The Promenade in Bolingbrook and the retail area in Joliet.

However, in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan, Romeoville stands to be successful in creating high quality jobs with good pay while additional housing could drive the expansion of restaurants to the area.

To view the comprehensive plan, check out www.bigpictureromeoville.com.